

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Dissecting Social Robotics Discourse: An Examination of the Drift

Towards Living With and For Machines

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Sociable robots are increasing in complexity, popularity, and visibility. With the rapid diffusion of digital technologies in contemporary cultures, there is often limited time for critical reflection. The purpose of this thesis is to critically dissect an evolving technology, social robotics, as it begins entering more and more modern contexts. Using an eclectic approach, this research examines social robotics discourse across *The New York Times* (from 1986 to 2010) and popular fiction. Specifically, this thesis analyzes the media promoted appeal of social robotics, how social robotics are being presented to a general and specific audience, and evaluates how popular discourse on social robotics might be changing perceptions of communication and humanity. This research serves as a starting point for ongoing research into how new technologies and discourse on new technologies change, and attempt to influence, people and culture.